

YOUR IMPORTANT ROLE

Welcome to the World of Outreach!



The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act, also known as the **Medicare Modernization Act**, is bringing better benefits and more health plan options to people with Medicare, including prescription drug coverage beginning January 1, 2006. You are a trusted source of information in your community and have a unique ability to connect with the people you serve, including those with Medicare.

Without the help of outreach partners like you, many people with Medicare would not get the information they need to make more informed choices about their health care, especially about prescription drug coverage.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is working to implement these important new benefits and options, and this toolkit is a first step in making people with Medicare aware of the changes. **This information will be updated regularly** through our website www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships as we continue to work hard to share information with you on the changes to Medicare, including the new Medicare prescription drug coverage.

What Should I Do?

This toolkit provides you with the information and resources you need to give the people you serve reliable information about Medicare's new prescription drug coverage and to help them enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan.

- **Beginning June 2005**, people with limited income and resources can start applying for extra help with prescription drug coverage.
- On **November 15, 2005**, people with Medicare can sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan to help lower their drug costs.
- In **January 2006**, Medicare prescription drug coverage begins for those who have enrolled.
- **May 15, 2006**, end of Open Enrollment Period. To pay a lower premium, most people need to enroll by May 15.

How Will this Toolkit Help Me?

The toolkit provides you with all the tools and information you need to conduct outreach on Medicare prescription drug coverage.

There are four sections to the toolkit: First, read the information in the **Quick Start: Important Information to Help You Get Started**. This section will prepare you to share information about Medicare prescription drug coverage.

The second section, **Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Outreach Materials**, contains handouts for presentations, visual aids, and enrollment forms. Additional tools and resources are included in the third section, **Resources and Practical Tools**. There you will find information about **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) and www.medicare.gov as well as a list of helpful Medicare publications. The last section, **If You Want to Know More**, gives more detailed information on the Medicare program.

Thank you for the important work you are doing to help people with Medicare. This toolkit will help you explain Medicare and the new Medicare prescription drug coverage. Email questions on this toolkit to BSPGtraining@cms.hhs.gov.



Important Dates

■ May 2005

Watch the mail for information from Social Security about applying for extra help with prescription drug coverage for people with limited income and resources.

■ June 2005

People with limited income and resources can start applying for extra help with drug plan costs.

■ October 2005

Watch the mail for *Medicare & You 2006* handbook.

■ November 15, 2005

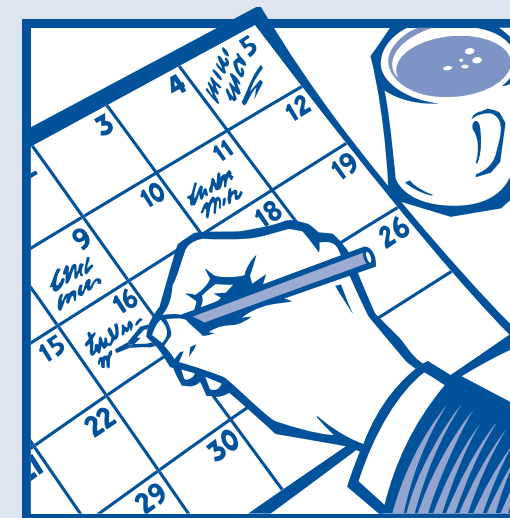
Enrollment in Medicare prescription drug coverage begins.

■ January 2006

Medicare prescription drug coverage begins for those who enroll.

■ May 15, 2006

End of Open Enrollment Period. To pay lower premiums, most people need to enroll by May 15.



THANK YOU!

Whether you are an experienced Medicare partner or just learning about Medicare for the first time, you have an important role in helping reach the many people with Medicare who need information about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage.

We deeply appreciate your valuable contributions to this important effort. We look forward to working with you in the coming months as we strive to get the message out on Medicare prescription drug coverage and to improve health care for America's seniors and people with disabilities.

These materials were prepared in March 2005 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. They are intended for training purposes only and are not legal documents.